

## **Addendum B**

### **Mark of Achievement, Posthumous Degree, Extraordinary Circumstances**

#### **Policy Rationale**

Michigan State University (MSU) acknowledges that the pathway to completion of a degree requires tremendous commitment with important accomplishments and growth occurring along the way. Recognition of academic growth and accomplishments of our students, especially the conferral of a baccalaureate degree, is an important milestone in their lives, as well as in the lives of their families and friends. MSU also recognizes that unforeseen and unfortunate circumstances can interrupt or halt students' pathways to degree completion. In these moments, as an institution, MSU wishes to extend grace and acknowledge students' accomplishments through the bestowing of special recognitions. Therefore, MSU may grant Marks of Achievement, Posthumous Degrees or, in extraordinary or rare situations, Degrees Granted Under Special Circumstances. In the case of extraordinary or rare situations, the required criteria will be determined on a case-by-case basis and require appropriate approvals for a degree to be bestowed.

#### **Mark of Achievement**

Any student (undergraduate or graduate/professional) whose progression towards degree completion is halted due to extraordinary or rare circumstances, such as the onset of terminal illness or an accident/injury that prevents the student from completing the degree or in the case of the student's death, is eligible for a Mark of Achievement as long as that student was an active student in good standing at MSU at the time of the onset of the extraordinary or rare circumstance or at the time of death.

Requests for the Mark of Achievement may be initiated by the student, if applicable, the student's family, the faculty of the department/school/college, or an MSU administrator. Requests from the student, if applicable, or the student's family can be made through the Critical Incident Response Unit or to the department/school/college for initial review. The Provost will be notified by the Dean or Vice Provost for Undergraduate Education of the request for the Mark of Achievement. The Provost will confirm with the Registrar that the student was an active student in good standing. If confirmed, the Mark of Achievement is approved. The Mark of Achievement will note progress made toward the degree level (e.g., Bachelor, Master or Doctoral).

#### **Posthumous Degree**

An active undergraduate student who has achieved junior class status and is in good standing at MSU and whose degree completion is prevented due to the student's death may be awarded a Posthumous Degree.

Requests for a Posthumous Degree may be initiated by the student's family, the faculty of the department/school/college, or an MSU administrator. Requests from the student's family can be made through the Critical Incident Response Unit or to the department/school/college for initial review. The Provost will be notified by the Dean or the Vice Provost for Undergraduate Education of the request for a Posthumous Degree. The Provost will confirm with the Registrar that the student was an active student in good standing at the time of death. Requests require the approval of the Provost and the President. If approved, the degree will be noted as "Posthumous" on the transcript. Generally, the awarding of posthumous degrees will only be considered at the baccalaureate degree level unless special circumstances arise.

### **Degree Granted Under Special Circumstances**

An undergraduate student or graduate/professional student who is active and in good standing and whose degree completion is prevented due to terminal illness or extraordinary or rare circumstances, as described below, may be awarded a degree under special circumstances.

#### **Terminal Illness**

Special consideration may be given to awarding a degree to an undergraduate or graduate/professional student who has a terminal illness, confirmed by a qualified healthcare provider or the University physician, where such illness prevents continued progress towards degree completion. A terminal illness is an illness or condition which cannot be cured and will lead to death and where projected life expectancy prevents the student from completion of the degree. To be considered, students must be active and in good standing with significant progress toward the degree completed (e.g., 80% of the credit hour completion for undergraduate students and similar progress for graduate/professional students is recommended).

Requests for degrees granted under special circumstances may be initiated by the student, student's family, the faculty of the department/school/college, or an MSU administrator. Requests from the student and/or student's family should be made to the department/school/college for initial review. The Provost will be notified by the Dean or the Vice Provost for Undergraduate Education of the request for a Degree Granted under Special Circumstances. Requests require approval of the respective Dean, the Provost, and the President. If approved, the degree will be noted as "Degree Granted under Special Circumstances" on the transcript.

#### **Extraordinary or Rare Circumstances**

Special consideration may be given to awarding a degree to an undergraduate student not meeting the criteria above or a graduate/professional student due to extraordinary or rare circumstances that prevented progress towards degree completion. These situations are extremely rare and unusual and will be determined on a case-by-case basis.

Requests for degrees granted under special circumstances which describe the extraordinary and rare circumstances may be initiated by the student, if applicable, the student's family, the

faculty of the department/school/college, or an MSU administrator. Requests from the student, if applicable, and/or student's family should be made to the department/school/college for initial review. The Provost will be notified by the Dean or Vice Provost for Undergraduate Education of the request for a Degree Granted under Special Circumstances. Requests require approval of the respective Dean, the Provost, and the President. If approved, the degree will be noted, as appropriate, as either "Posthumous" or "Degree Granted under Special Circumstances" on the transcript.